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STATE FOR CA/VO; PRM/A; EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/03/2017

TAGS: [CVIS](#) [PREF](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR ADVISORY OPINION ON REFUGEE INQUIRY

REF: 06 STATE 25824

Classified By: CDA SVILLAROSA for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (U) On 29 December 2006, Post received an e-mail forwarded by AskCA@state.gov, requesting the inquirer to contact the U.S. Embassy or nearest consulate for information and assistance. The original 19 December 2006 e-mail from Journalist.sss@gmail.com reads as follows:

Begin text.

Dear Sir,
We have just learnt that our request for information has been forwarded to your section. We are former Myanmar customs officials dodging the arrest of Myanmar government. They have charged with corruption, but there is no way for a Myanmar government employee to survive without corruption. Our colleagues who have been arrested have been sentenced to disproportionate (sp) imprisonment. We would like to know whether we are eligible to some of the refugee program of your department. Reply as soon as possible.

End text.

¶2. (C/NF) Although this individual(s) has not walked in and Post has therefore not been able to assess any imminent danger, we note the example in para 26 of reftel that "temporary refuge may not be granted to foreign nationals who simply wish to ... evade local criminal law but who are not in such danger." At face value of the e-mail, one can infer an admission of corruption. Thus, while subject to prosecution under Burmese law, the charges may be well founded. As the inquirer has made no reference to any offer of information to the USG, Post does not see a compelling necessity to invite the inquirer to the Embassy for consultation. If/when the inquirer does appear as a walk-in, Post would of course follow procedures as outlined in reftel. Post seeks the Department's guidance how to respond to this written inquiry.

¶3. (C/NF) The Department should keep in mind the peculiar conditions in Burma. UNHCR does have an office in Rangoon. We are concerned about jeopardizing the good work UNHCR does here to protect Burmese citizens from an abusive government. Referring doubtful cases of Burmese citizens to UNHCR might prompt the regime to retaliate against UNHCR.

VILLAROSA